

By Ed Kinane



Shortly before 8 a.m. on Thursday, June 20, 2019, our Upstate Drone Action caravan of six or seven vehicles arrived, unannounced, at the main gate of Hancock AFB in De Witt, a suburb of Syracuse, New York. Two of us – accompanied by one of our videographers - proceeded to the guardhouse 50 yards in from East Molloy Road to read aloud and deliver a statement (below). The statement called on base personnel, in accordance with U.S. and International Law, to refuse to obey their chain of command's illegal orders to commit what are ongoing drone war crimes.

Simultaneously we set about creating a street theatre tableau blocking the main entrance to the base. As we have many times over the past decade, we were calling out Hancock for hosting the 174th Attack Wing of the NY National Guard. The 174th remotely pilots missile-spewing robotic MQ9 Reaper drones over Afghanistan (and probably elsewhere). These classified operations result in the terrorizing, maiming and killing of uncounted and uncountable numbers of unarmed and undefended children and their parents.

Until our arrest about two hours later, we held an unadorned, white 3 x 8 foot banner across the driveway leading to the gate. In bold black letters, it read:

DRONES FLY, CHILDREN DIE - OUR HEARTS ARE BREAKING.

Nearby, also in the ingress, two grandmothers in abayas silently sat grieving, holding “infants” in bloodied swaddling clothes. Bloodied “body parts” and children’s toys and things were strewn about. Crossing back and forth between the banner and the road, pushed by a man in a cape and death’s mask, a model Reaper on wheels fleshed out the tableau. Across the road from base property, over a dozen supporters, singing and chanting, held signs like: CHILDREN ARE NOT “COLLATERAL DAMAGE.”

Two rain-soaked hours later, the DeWitt town police and Onondaga County sheriffs, having converged in numerous vehicles, ordered us to leave base property. Those eight who chose not to do so were arrested: Tom Joyce (Ithaca), Dan Burgevin and Mark Scibilia-Carver (Trumansburg) and Rae Kramer, Julianne Oldfield, Les Billips, Ann Tiffany and Ed Kinane (Syracuse).

We were handcuffed, separated by gender and taken in two paddy wagons to the sheriffs’ north station where we were held in three small cells. After a couple hours we were transported by van to the downtown Syracuse “Justice Center.” In booking we were ordered to strip, spread our cheeks and, where applicable, lift our scrotums. Our street clothes were put in a device for what seemed to be some chemical inspection and replaced with jail issue.

We were held in a chilly, dirty holding cell with other inmates all day. In the early evening we separately appeared before a Judge Murphy. Public defenders pled us not guilty. The assistant D.A. recommended we be ROR’ed and released on our own recognizance without bail. After being taken back to the holding cell, we were released – to the welcoming arms of support people and fellow perps – sometime after 10:30 p.m.

Five of us - LB, DB, TJ, EK, RK - must appear in the DeWitt town night court at 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 25; JO, AT & MS-C. must appear June 26, also at 6 p.m. We were each

charged with two violations - trespass and disorderly conduct, and with a misdemeanor, obstruction of government administration (OGA). Thus far Hancock's crimes against humanity go insufficiently exposed.

June 20 Letter to Hancock Personnel

REAPER DRONE WORKERS: PLEASE HONOR YOUR CONSTITUTIONAL OATH

To the men and women of the 174th Attack Wing of the NYS National Guard,

Each of you, when you joined the United States Armed Forces, raised your right hand and solemnly swore to uphold the United States Constitution. Article VI of that Constitution states:

"This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding."

This clause is known as the Supremacy Clause. The Supremacy Clause declares that when the U.S. ratifies international treaties, those treaties become the "supreme law of the land." This means they trump all local and federal law – including the U.S. Uniform Code of Military Justice.

One such treaty is the United Nations Charter. Signed by the U.S. president in 1945 and ratified by a Senate vote of 89 to two, that charter remains in effect today.

The Charter's Preamble states that its purpose is to "save future generations from the scourge of war." It further states, "all nations shall refrain from the use of force against another nation."

This U.N. Treaty applies to all levels – federal, state, and local – of the three branches of our government – Executive, Legislative and Judicial. The personnel of all these entities must act consistently with U.S. treaties and obey the U.S. Constitution, including Article VI.

Under the U.N. Charter and under long-established international law, anyone – civilian, military, government official or judge – who knowingly participates in or supports illegal threat or use of force against another nation or its people is committing a war crime.

Men and women on duty at Hancock AFB: Several years ago four of your colleagues, veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, formerly operating weaponized drones at other U.S. bases have - courageously - gone public about drone war crimes they acknowledge committing.

The 174th Attack Wing of the NY Air National Guard deploys hunter/killer Reaper drones 24/7 over Afghanistan and probably elsewhere. These weaponized robotic drones are instruments of terror. They perpetrate extrajudicial killings, violate due process, violate national sovereignty and kill non-combatants and civilians. They bring dishonor on the United States and upon its armed services.

Under the U.S. Uniform Code of Military Justice you must not be complicit in these crimes against peace, crimes against humanity and war. In fact, you are required to disobey unlawful orders from a superior.

Those protesting here today are exercising our First Amendment right to petition our government for a redress of grievances (the vile use of our tax money). We urge you to do the honorable thing. We urge you to heed your conscience.

Upstate Drone Action Coalition